

## **HOPE FOR BREAST CANCER IN BANGLADESH**

**DHAKA, JUNE 26 --** Dr. Richard Love, breast oncologist and professor at The Ohio State University, U.S.A., recently visited Bangladesh to discuss a pioneering clinical trial and to offer Bangladeshi breast cancer sufferers hormonal treatment for the disease. Dr. Love spoke with doctors at several hospitals in Dhaka, saying “hormone therapy should be the first line of treatment for women whose tumors show sensitivity to hormonal change.”

Through a grant from the Breast Cancer Research Foundation in New York, Dr. Love is conducting a study in 11 countries in Asia and Africa designed to investigate the optimal timing for hormonal breast cancer treatments. During his visit he encouraged doctors to consider hormone therapy for cancer sufferers whose tumors are hormone receptor positive and asked for their help in enrolling eligible patients in this study.

Every year in Bangladesh approximately 35,000 women develop breast cancer, many of whom never seek treatment. Although the majority of breast lumps (“chakas”) are not cancerous and require minimal treatment, some breast lumps require immediate attention. According to Dr. Love, prompt diagnosis and treatment of breast cancer provides the best chance of long-term survival.

There are many reasons women in Bangladesh do not seek treatment for breast lumps. Women report not knowing where to find help when they discover a breast lump. Modern treatment options may not be available in their communities, and travel to the nearest treatment site is often expensive and time consuming. Women also report fear of rejection by their friends and families if they are diagnosed with breast cancer.

Fortunately, treatment options, including hormonal therapy, are growing for women suffering from breast cancer in Bangladesh. While many women who seek diagnosis of a breast lump will return home comforted that their breast lump is benign, those women who are diagnosed with breast cancer have a number of new treatment options depending on factors such as the type of breast cancer they have, their age at diagnosis, and other existing medical conditions.

Dr. Love's clinical trial addresses the barriers women can face in receiving treatment. Transport to and from the study site, accommodation during treatment, treatment costs, cost of medicines and follow-up care are provided free. And caring doctors and staff will ensure that the treatment process goes smoothly. All women who discover a breast lump should go for diagnosis as soon as possible. Women under 45 diagnosed with breast cancer should undergo hormone tests to determine the best treatment.

Women interested in being considered for participation in Dr. Love's study should contact their nearest participating institution for more information. In areas outside of Dhaka, BRAC Shushasthos and NSDP Smiling Sun clinics can provide more information on this study. Participating Institutions within Dhaka include Dhaka Medical College and Hospital, Bangladesh Medical College, the National Institute of Cancer Research and Hospital, and Holy Family Red Crescent Hospital. Military personnel and their families may contact the Bangladesh Rifles Hospital or any of the border hospital sites throughout Bangladesh.

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*Note: A Bangla translation of this article is also available from the American Center. If you are interested in the translation, please call the American Center Press Section (Tel: 8813440-4, Fax: 9881677; e-mail: [DhakaPA@state.gov](mailto:DhakaPA@state.gov); Website: <http://dhaka.usembassy.gov>*